Cabinet for wheat, oats and potatoes. And I appealed to the farming community, on the strength of this guarantee, to do their best to increase the 1917 harvest, and to make the best use of the time still available. Somewhat optimistically, as events in the last few years have shown, I declared that " the country is alive now as it has never been before to the essential value of agriculture to the community, and whatever befalls it will never again be neglected by a Government." It is still difficult to wean the urban population from a rooted habit of regarding the countryside as a picnicking ground, whose accessible amenities are restricted by fences and often destroyed by cultivation. They have not yet acquired a real comprehension of the essential importance of the land of the country to its security, its permanent prosperity and contentment.

The legislation foreshadowed in my speech was in due course brought forward in the form of the Corn Production Bill, which was given its first reading on 5th April. The second reading of this measure, on 24th and 25th April, was carried by a majority of more than ten to one, but only after weathering fierce attacks by opponents as diverse as Sir Frederick Banbury, Mr. Runciman, Mr. R. D. Holt, and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. The measure was in four parts. Part I contained the guarantee of minimum

Corn Production Bill introduced

prices for corn, Part II minimum wages for land workers, Part III prohibited rent increases as a result of the guarantees, and Part IV made provision for control and enforcement of cultivation. All these four parts hung together, and as I have shown, they formed a necessary system for ensuring the production of more home-grown food. But each part, taken